

DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
DECEMBER 10, 2005

DSB BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Sharon Berry  
Lori Hunter  
James Johnson  
Lindi Johnson  
Nola McKinney

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT

Jim Hill  
Buddy Spivey

DSB BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Searcy Ewell  
AER Representative to be named

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT

Harold Brewer  
Ramona Sangalli  
AER Representative to be named

DHS Representative: Janie Huddleston

Attorney General's Office Representative: Tom Gay

Governor's Office Representative: None

DSB Staff Present: Jim Hudson, Katy Morris, Coral Virden, Carolyn Holbrook, Jim Pearson, Donna Birdwell, Lyndel Lybarger, Kara Aaron, Mary Cabaniss, Kandy Cayce, Ginny McWilliams, Charlie Cain-Davis, Randy Johnson

**CALL TO ORDER.** Chairman Mrs. Lindi Johnson called the meeting to order.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA.** Chairman Johnson proposed one amendment to the agenda to include the election of officers for Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary. The Vice Chairman; Mr. Searcy Ewell, was unable to attend the board meeting due to health reasons. Mrs. Sharon Berry made a motion to accept the agenda as amended. Mr. James Johnson seconded the motion. ***Motion passed.***

**INTRODUCTIONS.** All persons in attendance introduced themselves.

**APPROVAL OF 09/10/05 MINUTES.** Board Chairman proposed one amendment to the minutes. Ex-Officio Board member, Mr. Jim Hill, was omitted from the list of board members who were present at the board meeting held September 10, 2005. Mr. Hill was added to the list of board members present. Mr. James Johnson made a motion to accept the minutes as amended. Mrs. Sharon Berry seconded the motion. ***Motion passed.*** Motion was made by Mrs. Nola McKinney to approve the minutes. Mrs. Sharon Berry seconded the motion to approve the minutes as amended. ***Motion passed.***

**DSB DIRECTOR'S REPORT** – Rehabilitation Services Administration and the state rehab agencies are currently functioning under continuing resolution awaiting finalization of the federal budget. Region VI RSA offices are officially closed. Technical assistance, Monitoring and the 107 Program Review will be done directly from Washington. The monitoring visits will take place some time in March or April.

Vending Facility Program - The Randolph Sheppard Act that governs Vending Programs nationwide is under close scrutiny in Washington. Objections have been raised that there are too many sighted people working in the Vending Program, not enough blind vendors actually doing the work, and that the blind vendors are making too much, especially at the air bases. Obviously the managers have the right to hire the workers they need for their particular location. We are working with Randolph Sheppard programs in other states to monitor the discussions and actions in Washington.

Name Change for the Department. The Department of Human Services is now known as the Department of Health and Human Services. DSB is working to help transition to the new department structure. Hopefully this single structure will help provide more alternatives and services for blind people.

Annual Performance Statistics. The federal fiscal year ended September 30, 2005 and DSB vocational rehabilitation consumers have experienced another record year with 344 individuals obtaining appropriate jobs and being closed as successfully rehabilitated. By contract, the Older Blind program experienced a decrease in successful closures netting three fewer than the year before. This trend was expected, as funding has forced reductions in the number of Older Blind staff, as well as reassignment of a large portion of their work time to caseloads funded by other programs.

Workforce Investment Board – DSB continues to try to focus the attention of the Workforce Investment Board upon disability-related issues within the ten workforce centers and satellites. Nationally the disability community is only receiving about one percent of services from the workforce centers. A DSB counselor representative serves on each local workforce board in the state.

Medicaid Waiver – Grant Developer, Ms. Kandy Cayce, reported that though the waiver request has been submitted, we have received little positive feedback. There seem to be difficulties with the proposed service delivery design being based on instruction in independent living, rather than the provision of assisted living.

**EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR COMMITTEE REPORT** - Ms. Coral Virden read a portion of minutes from the 2006 Employee of the Year Committee Conference call held October 20, 2005. The section dealt with Nominations Criteria. Mrs. Nola McKinney made a motion to approve the changes to the Nomination Criteria and recommended that the Committee submit the outline for the new employee Biography section to the board at the March 11, 2006 board meeting. Mr. James Johnson seconded the motion. **Motion passed.**

**RECOGNITION OF FORMER BOARD MEMBERS** - Mr. John Barnett was recognized and presented a plaque for three years of service as member of the DSB Board, representing the Lions of Arkansas. Mr. Jim Adams, who has recently taken a job out-of-state, was also commended for four years' service on the board, representing the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired. Arrangements will be made for delivery of the plaque to Mr. Adams. A Certificate of Recognition will be formally presented to Mr. Pierre Curry, during the upcoming quarterly meeting of the Committee of Licensed Blind Vendors, for ten years' service to DSB, as ex officio board member representing that committee.

**ARKANSAS RADIO READING SERVICES NETWORK.** Arkansas Radio Reading Services Director Mr. Randy Johnson spoke to the board regarding the history and services of the program. Originally, it served mostly central Arkansas reading the Gazette about 4 hours daily. Over the years, the service has expanded statewide, covering numerous daily and weekly newspapers and many other programs with the reading accessible through specialized receivers, educational television stations, touch-tone telephone and most recently, audio streaming via computer. The Service is now starting a two year campaign to get its programming placed on all the cable systems and satellites as audio stream.

**CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY REPORT.** DSB Case Reviewer Mrs. Ginny McWilliams reported that client satisfaction surveys in appropriate media were mailed to vocational rehabilitation consumers last week. The surveys are to be returned to Mrs. McWilliams who will tabulate the information and submit it to the board at the March 2006 meeting. Surveys for the Older Blind Program will be mailed in January 2006. The surveys will be returned to Dr. Brenda Cavanaugh of Mississippi State University for tabulation and inclusion in the nationwide satisfaction survey and well as the survey for DSB. Mrs. Nola McKinney made a motion to modify the DSB survey to ensure it includes those questions being tracked on the national older blind survey in addition to the other questions posed by the board committee. Mrs. Sharon Berry seconded the motion. **Motion passed.**

**CO-MEETING OF DSB BOARD AND ARKANSAS COUNCIL OF THE BLIND**

**ANNUAL MEETING** - Several years ago, the DSB Board voted to make reasonable efforts every year to meet in conjunction with the statewide annual conventions of the Arkansas Council of the Blind (ACB) and the National Federation of the Blind of Arkansas (NFBA). The board has met in conjunction with the NFBA Annual convention the last three years; however, scheduling difficulties have prevented a co-meeting with ACB. Discussions concluded that this year, the late April timing of the ACB Annual convention` is too far away from either the March or June DSB Board Meeting to make it a reasonable option. Mrs. Sharon Berry made a motion that the DSB Board meetings for March and June 2006 remain as is. Ms. Lori Hunter seconded the motion. **Motion passed.**

**DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER REPORT (DRC)** - No representative was present. No report was submitted.

**ARKANSAS INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL REPORT (AILC)** – No representative was present. A report was submitted with the board packet.

**ELECTION OF DSB OFFICERS** – Legislation provides that elections shall be held every year for DSB Board Vice-Chairman and Secretary and every other year for Chairman. In recent years, this has occurred during the December board meeting. With so many absences due to vacancy or ill-health, Mrs. Sharon Berry motioned that the election of all three officers be postponed until the March Board meeting to allow present board members and those who may be appointed in the next few months an extended opportunity to participate in the election. Mrs. Nola McKinney seconded the motion. **Motion passed.**

**CONSUMER INPUT-** Chairman Johnson called for consumer input. A question arose regarding board action to authorize standard travel reimbursement. Tom Gay of the Attorney General's Office noted that Arkansas law provides that boards must vote during the first meeting of the calendar year to authorize payment to members for meeting related expenses. It was agreed that this would be an action of the March DSB Board meeting.

**QUARTERLY SUCCESS REPORT** – Two clients from a senior support group for visually impaired individuals in the Hot Springs area were chosen to receive full stipends to attend the Lions World Services Senior program. The clients were really enthusiastic about learning Braille after they attended the program. On the national level, a blind employee recently won a \$3M judgment after being unlawfully terminated by a state agency.

**Schedule of Board Orientation** - Orientation for board members: Sharon Berry, James Johnson, Lori Hunter and the new AER members will be held at 8:30 a.m. Saturday, March 11, 2006 at the Department of Health and Human Services, Donaghey Plaza South in a Conference Room to be announced.

**Schedule of Next Meeting** - 10:00 a.m. March 11, 2006, at the Department of Health and Human Services, Donaghey Plaza South Building, 700 Main Street, Little Rock, First Floor, Conference Room A.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nola McKinney  
Secretary